

Healthy Eating Meal Plan

When you are growing, it is important that your body gets the right nutrients. Your bones and muscles are developing, so they need certain foods and drinks to help them. You can make choices of what you eat and drink to help you grow healthy and strong.

Seven- and eight-year-olds need between 1,200 and 2,000 calories per day, depending on their height and how active they are.

Calories should come from:

- Fat – mostly healthy fats like the fats found in olive oil, fish and nuts.
- Carbohydrates – mostly wholemeal carbohydrates like brown rice and wholemeal bread.
- Protein – mostly lean protein, like fish or chicken.

Breakfast

A nutritious, balanced breakfast will keep you energized and satisfied all morning. Why not try a fruit smoothie made with ice, strawberries, blueberries and bananas, or a bowl of porridge or yogurt with sliced apples and a sprinkle of cinnamon?

Lunch

Greasy foods like chips and burgers are okay to eat once in a while, but try to balance them with other healthier options, like carrot sticks or an apple. Keep your choices varied, fresh and tasty. A healthy lunch is high in protein, vegetables, fruit and fibre, but low in fat, salt and sugar. For example:

- A wholemeal turkey sandwich with lettuce and tomato, pretzels or wholemeal crackers, and fresh veggies with guacamole to dip them into
- or
- Chicken and peppers in a wholemeal pitta bread with a few cherry tomatoes and an apple.

Dinner

Helping an adult to prepare your food is fun. Challenge yourself to make healthy changes to your favourite foods! For example: if you love lasagne, make it with wholemeal pasta, just a sprinkle of cheese, turkey mince and plenty of veggies, like broccoli and mushrooms. Serve the lasagne with a large helping of salad. Here are some other ways to turn your favourite foods into healthier choices:

- Make a homemade pizza using wholemeal crust, chicken pieces and your favourite veggies, then top with a bit of cheese
- or
- Try homemade burgers made with turkey mince served in a wholemeal bread bun, with a side of 'veggie-fries' instead of chips.

Snacks

Try to keep snacks to two or three times a day. Eating crisps or sweets is fine, but try not to eat them every day! Some healthy snack choices include:

- Vegetable sticks
- Fruit
- Yoghurt

What we eat isn't all that's important! Think about what you are drinking, too. Don't always drink fizzy-pop and juice drinks – drink water instead! Water helps our body in many ways: It carries nutrients to cells; It helps to remove waste products from our major organs; it helps us to control our body temperature. Water is constantly being lost from our body (when we go to the toilet, when we breathe and when we sweat) so if we don't drink enough we become dehydrated. Dehydration can cause tiredness, headaches, lack of concentration, and dry skin. If you're taking part in sports or if the weather is warm it is important to drink extra water.

A balance of nutritious foods help you to grow strong and healthy. Eating a variety of nutritious foods can help you stay healthy for the rest of your life.